



**Australian  
Bureau of  
Statistics**

1383.0.55.002

# Measures of Australia's Progress At a Glance 2007

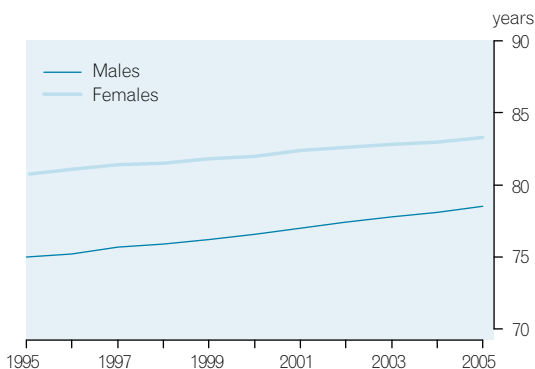




# Individuals

## Health

### Life expectancy at birth(a)



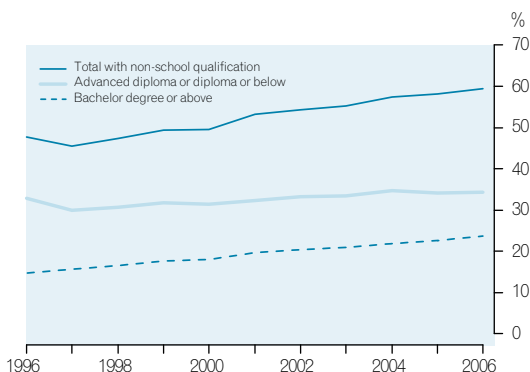
(a) Data are three-year averages, with the year shown being the last year of the three-year period.

Source: *Deaths, Australia, 2005* (cat. no. 3302.0).

- Between 1995 and 2005, Australian life expectancy at birth increased by 4 years for boys and 3 years for girls.
- A boy born in 2005 could expect to live to be 78, while a girl could expect to reach 83 years of age.

## Education and training

### Highest level of non-school qualification of people aged 25–64(a)



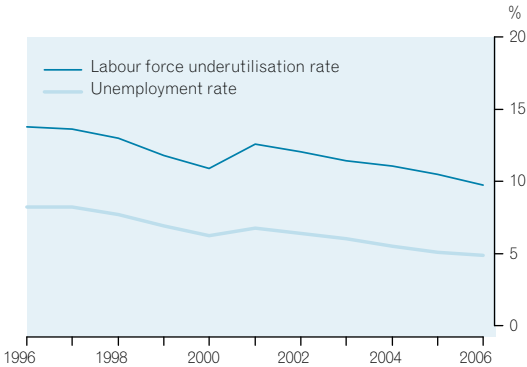
(a) People can hold multiple qualifications, however only data for the highest non-school qualification are collected and presented.

Source: ABS data available on request, *Survey of Education and Work*.

- The proportion of 25–64 year olds with a non-school qualification increased from 48% in 1996 to 59% in 2006.
- The proportion of people with a higher education qualification increased from 15% to 24%, while the proportion of people whose highest qualification was a vocational qualification was similar to a decade earlier (34%).

## Work

### Unemployment and labour force underutilisation rates



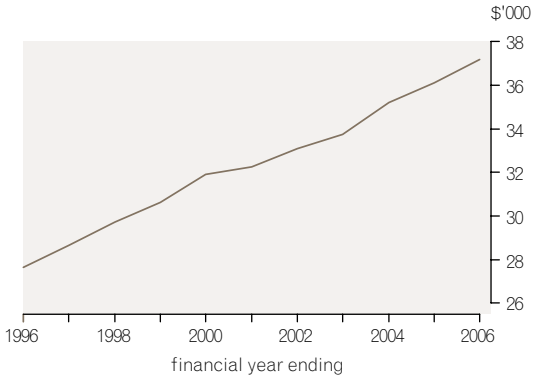
Source: *Underemployed Workers, Australia* (cat. no. 6265.0); *Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets* (cat. no. 6202.0.55.001).

- Australia's annual average unemployment rate decreased from 8.2% in 1996 to 4.9% in 2006.
- The labour force underutilisation rate fell from 13.8% to 9.8% over the same decade.

# The Economy and Economic Resources

## National income

### Real net national disposable income per capita(a)



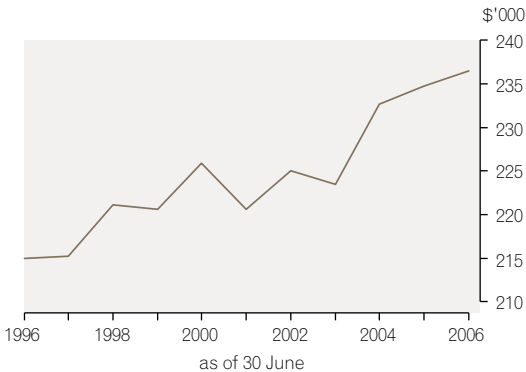
(a) Reference year 2004–05.

Source: Australian System of National Accounts, 2005–2006 (cat. no. 5204.0).

- Australia experienced significant real income growth between 1995–96 and 2005–06. Real net national disposable income per capita grew by 3.0% a year on average.

## National wealth

### Real national net worth per capita(a)



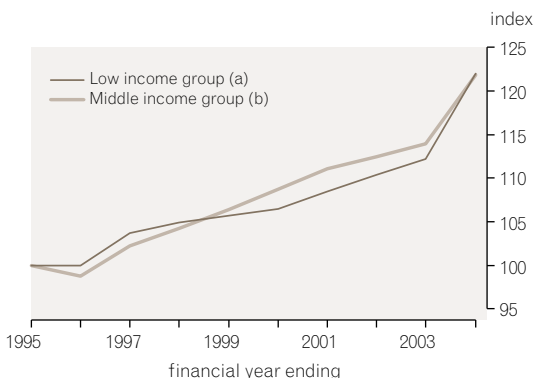
(a) Reference year 2004–05.

Source: Australian System of National Accounts, 2005–06 (cat. no. 5204.0) and Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0).

- 'Real national net worth per capita' shows the amount by which Australia's assets exceed its liabilities to the rest of the world, adjusted to remove the effects of price change.
- Australia's real net worth per capita rose at an average annual rate of 1.0% between June 1996 and June 2006.

## Economic hardship

### Average real equivalised disposable household income



- (a) People in the 2nd and 3rd income deciles from the bottom of the distribution when all people are ranked, from lowest to highest, by their equivalised disposable household income.
- (b) People in the middle income quintile (5th and 6th deciles) after being ranked, from lowest to highest, by their equivalised disposable household income.

Source: *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2003–2004* (cat. no. 6523.0).

- People in economic hardship are more likely to have low income. Having low income can impact on people's ability to access a minimum standard of goods and services.
- From 1994–95 to 2003–04, there has been a continuing upward trend in the real income of low income Australians.

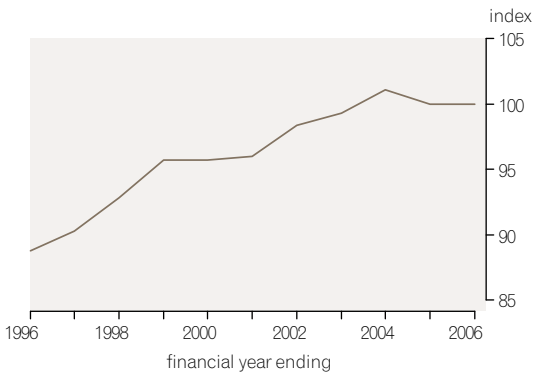
## Housing: No headline indicator

- At this time there is no one indicator that succinctly captures whether people's many needs and desires for suitable housing are being met.
- Taking just one aspect as an example – in 2003–04, 3% of households across Australia required one or more extra bedrooms to accommodate their residents and 77% had one or more bedrooms spare.

*Source: Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia, 2003–2004 (cat. no. 4130.0.55.001).*

## Productivity

### Multifactor productivity



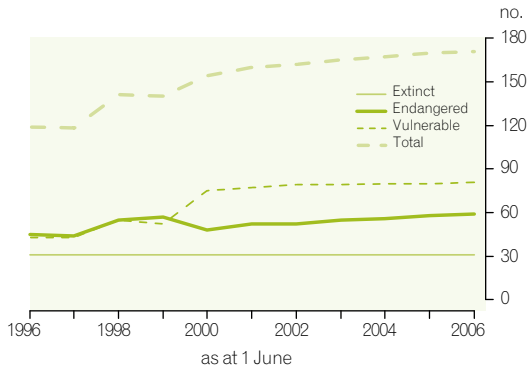
*Source: Australian System of National Accounts, 2005–2006 (cat. no. 5204.0).*

- 'Multifactor productivity' represents productivity growth (improvement), which occurs when increases in goods and services (outputs) exceed what can be accounted for by increases in labour, capital or other inputs.
- During the decade 1995–96 to 2005–06, multifactor productivity rose 1.2% per year on average.

# The Environment

## The natural landscape: Four headline indicators

### Biodiversity: Threatened bird and mammal species(a)

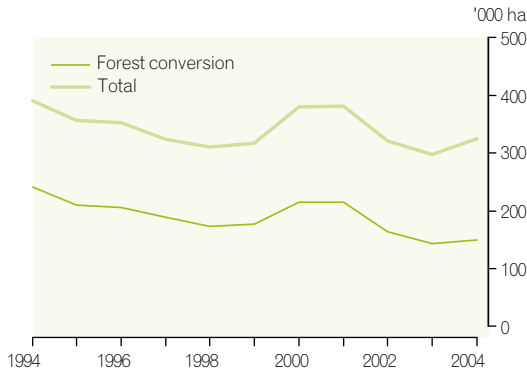


(a) Excludes seabirds, marine mammals and animals living on islands far offshore.

Source: Department of Environment and Heritage, 2006.

- Although the numbers of extinct, endangered and vulnerable birds and mammals are only a small part of the overall biological diversity in Australia, a decline in these groups threatens ecological processes and can point to a wider decline in biodiversity.
- Between 1996 and 2006 the number of bird and mammal species assessed as extinct, endangered or vulnerable rose from 119 to 171, an increase of 44%.

### Biodiversity: Annual area of land cleared



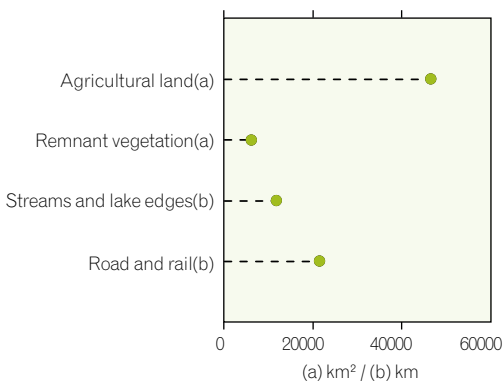
Note: The figures do not distinguish between the type of vegetation (native or non-native) that was cleared.

Source: Data supplied on request from Australian Greenhouse Office.



- Land clearing destroys plants and local ecosystems and removes the food and habitat on which other native species rely.
- Between 1994 and 2004, the rate of land clearing declined. The estimated 325,500 ha of land cleared in 2004 was about 17% less than that cleared in 1994.

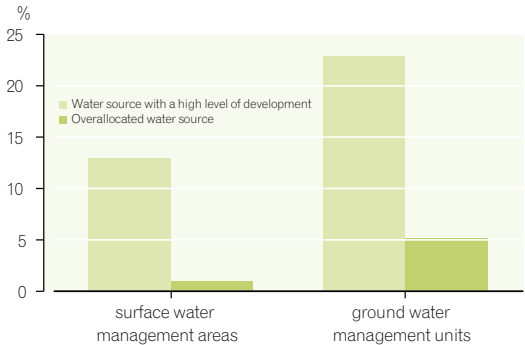
### Land: Assets affected by or at risk from salinity – 2000



Source: Australian Dryland Salinity Assessment 2000, National Land and Water Resources Audit 2001.

- Dryland salinity occurs when the water table rises, bringing natural salts to the surface. In sufficient quantity, these salts impact on vegetation, water resources, pipelines, houses and roads.
- In 2000, about 46,500 sq km of agricultural land, 1,600 km of rail and 19,900 km of roads were either affected by, or at risk from, salinity.

## Inland waters: level of development of water sources – 2004–05



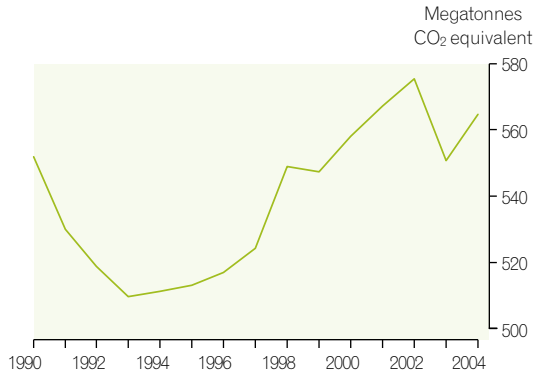
Note: A water source with a high level of development is one where water access entitlements are between 70% and 100% of sustainable yield. An overallocated water source is one where water access entitlements are more than 100% of sustainable yield.

Source: National Water Commission, Australian Water Resources 2005.

- Much of our economy (agriculture in particular) relies on water, so the condition of freshwater ecosystems has a critical impact on the wider environment.
- In 2004–05, about 1% of Australia's surface water management areas and 5% of groundwater management units were overallocated. A further 13% of surface water management areas and 23% of groundwater management units had a high level of development.

## The air and atmosphere: Two headline indicators

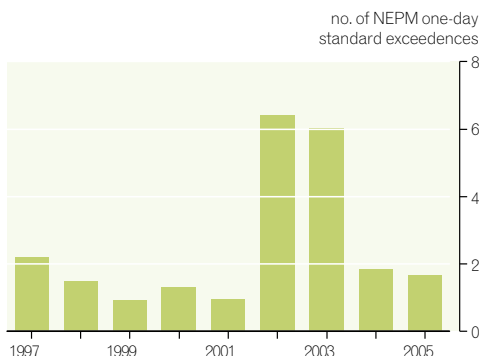
### Australia's net greenhouse gas emissions



Source: National Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2004, Australian Greenhouse Office.

Australia's net greenhouse gas emissions in 2004 totalled about 565 megatonnes (Mt) CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, an increase of 2.3% since 1990.

## Urban air quality, days fine particle health standards were exceeded



Note: Data are from sites from selected cities, and have been combined in proportion to each city's population.

Source: State environmental protection agencies, 2006 and *Regional Population Growth, Australia* (cat. no. 3218.0).

- The indicator measures the number of days when fine particle (PM<sub>10</sub>) concentrations in the air exceeded the National Environment Protection Measures (NEPM) standard.
- The sharp increase in 2002 and 2003 was mainly due to bushfires and dust storms around the Sydney and Melbourne areas, which masked the contribution from longer trend sources, such as car exhausts.

## Oceans and estuaries: No headline indicator

- The marine environment is important to Australian society and the economy and although this dimension has no headline indicator, it has important aspects which different organisations have attempted to measure.
- In 2005, for fish stocks managed by the Australian Government, 24 of the 83 principal classified species were overfished or subject to overfishing.

Source: *Fishery Status Reports 2005: Status of Fish Stocks Managed by the Australian Government*, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra.

# Living Together

## Family, community and social cohesion:

### No headline indicator

- The quality and strength of people's relationships and bonds with others contribute to social cohesion, but there is no one indicator that captures all that might be important.
- In 2003–04, approximately 620,000 children lived without an employed parent.

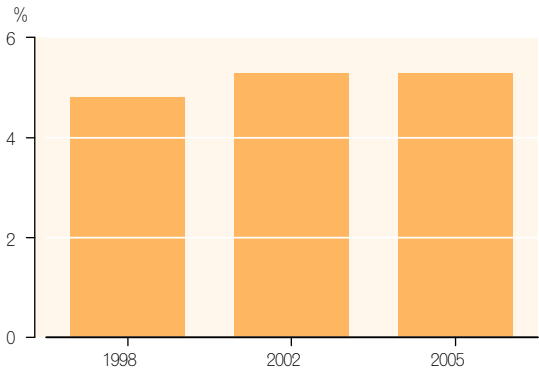
Source: ABS data available on request, *Survey of Income and Housing 2003–04*.

- Between 1995 and 2002, there was an increase from 24% to 34% in the proportion of people aged 18 years and over who did some voluntary work during the previous 12 months.

Source: *Voluntary Work, Australia, 2000* (cat. no. 4441.0) and *General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia, 2002* (cat. no. 4159.0).

## Crime: Two headline indicators

### Victims of selected personal crimes(a)

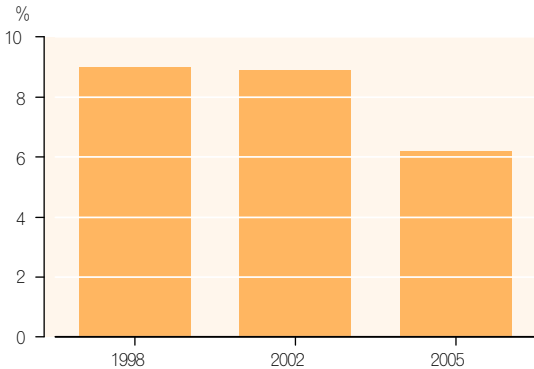


(a) Assault and robbery among people aged 15 and over. Sexual assault among people aged 18 and over.

Source: *Crime and Safety, Australia, 2005* (cat. no. 4509.0).

- Though small, the changes in the victimisation prevalence rates for selected personal crimes between 1998 and 2005 showed an increase from 4.8% to 5.3%, the same level as in 2002.

## Victims of selected household crimes(a)



(a) Actual or attempted break-in and motor vehicle theft.

Source: *Crime and Safety, Australia, 2005* (cat. no. 4509.0).

- Between 1998 and 2005, the proportion of households that were the victim of selected household crimes fell from 9.0% to 6.2%.

## Democracy, governance and citizenship:

### No headline indicator

- A healthy democracy needs citizens who take part in shaping the shared values and aspirations of a society. In Australia, voting is compulsory and in 2006 the vast majority of eligible citizens were enrolled to vote.

Source: *Australian Electoral Commission 2006, AEC Annual Report 2005–06*, <<http://www.aec.gov.au>>.

- A healthy democracy should also represent and express the will of the people. The representation of women in parliament is an indicator of women's political participation and the support for female candidates from political parties. In the Parliament of Australia at the beginning of 2007, one in four (25%) members of the House of Representatives and just over one in three (36%) senators were women.

Source: *Parliament of Australia 2006, Number of women in Parliament*, <<http://www.aph.gov.au>>.

## Is life in Australia getting better?

This booklet provides a brief summary of the 14 headline dimensions of progress which encapsulate major features of Australian life.

If you would like more detailed information about whether life in Australia is getting better, there are two other *Measures of Australia's Progress* products available.

Each year the ABS produces *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001) — a free web-based product which provides more information and explanation about the 14 headline dimensions of progress. The 2007 edition can be accessed or downloaded without charge at **[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)**.

The ABS also produces a detailed publication, *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0), with the most recent edition being 2006. The publication looks at the headline dimensions of progress in more detail, as well as a number of additional dimensions of progress. In all, it presents a whole suite of over a hundred indicators, designed to allow Australians to make their own assessment of whether life is getting better in Australia. The 2006 edition can be accessed or downloaded without charge at **[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)**.

Printed copies can also be purchased, for \$55, by contacting Client Services, ABS, GPO Box 796, Sydney, NSW, 2001 or phone 1300 135 070.



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